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Message Text

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70
ACTION DHA-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 AGR-05 TRSE-00

OMB-01 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

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R 101505Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6924

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 1065

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM,PA
SUBJ:HUMAN RIGHTS: PARAGUAY

REF:STATE 045319

1. IN RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION PARAGRAPH 10 REF TEL, FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES RELEVANT PORTIONS OF AIRGRAM ON THIS SUBJECT POUCHED YESTERDAY.

2. ONE OF THE MOST ISOLATED AND PRIMITIVE COUNTRIES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, PARAGUAY'S INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT REFLECTS ITS GENERAL SLOW ADVANCEMENT IN ALL FIELDS OF HUMAN ENDEAVOR. DESPITE CENTURIES OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE, HOWEVER, A VAST MAJORITY OF PARAGUAYANS TODAY ENJOY THE BASIC RIGHTS SET FORTH IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER A REGIME WHICH PRIDES ITSELF ON HAVING ACHIEVED INTERNAL PEACE, STABILITY AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

3. THE TWO MAIN SUBJECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN IN PARAGUAY RELATE TO THE DETENTION OF SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES UNDER THE STATE OF SIEGE PROVISIONS AND THE TREATMENT OF PARAGUAY'S UNASSIMILATED INDIAN MINORITY. ALLEGED GOP MISTREATMENT OF INDIANS HAS RECEIVED MOREINTERNATIONAL ATTENTION, AN OUTGROWTH OF THE 1972
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PUBLICATIONS OF A GERMAN ANTHROPOLIGIST. HOWEVER, A PRE-

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LIMINARY REPORT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE GOP WAS PRESENTLY MISTREATING INDIANS. REPEATED EMBASSY FIELD TRIPS HAVE ALSO FAILED TO CONFIRM ANY OFFICIAL POLICY OF ABUSE.

4. SINCE THE PARAGUAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY WAS FOUNDED IN 1928, SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS HAVE DRAWN A DISTINCTION BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND COMMUNIST AND RELATED MOVEMENTS DEDICATED TO TERROR AND THE VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE LATTER ARE CLASSIFIED AS SUBVERSIVES, AND ARE NORMALLY APPREHENDED AND DETAINED UNDER THE EXTRAORDINARY PROVISIONS OF THE STATE OF SIEGE, WHICH SUSPENDS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. A STATE OF SIEGE HAS BEEN IN EFFECT IN PARAGUAY CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS.

5. AT PRESENT,THERE ARE SLIGHTLY LESS THAN 100 PERSONS BEING HELD UNDER THE STATE OF SIEGE BY OFFICIAL COUNT. AS A RULE, WHEN A PERSON IS FIRST ARRESTED UNDER STATE OF SIEGE, HE IS SUBJECTED TO INTENSIVE INTERROGATION DURING WHICH VARIOUS DEGREES OF FORCE ARE APPLIED INAN EFFORT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY. ONCE THE POLICE ARE SATISFIED, THE PRISONER IS USUALLY SENT TO A POLICE STATION WHERE HE IS KEPT FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD AND IS NOT NORMALLY SUBJECTED TO FURTHER INTERROGATION.MANY OF THESE PRISONERS ARE RELEASED AFTER A FEW MONTHS. OTHERS ARE HELD FOR SEVERAL YEARS OR LONGER, AND A FEW "HARD CORE" TYPES HAVE BEEN HELD FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS. SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO TREATMENT OF SUBVERSIVES ARRESTED UNDER STATE OF SIEGE PROVISIONS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH OFFICIAL GOP POLICY. THERE ARE NOT EFFECTIVE CONTROLS TO INHIBIT THESE PRACTICES.

6. U.S. OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY STRESSED US CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WITH HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. WE BELIEVE THE PRESENT IMPROVED TREATMENT OF INDIANS IS IN PART THE RESULT OF EMBASSY PRODDING. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT OUR REPRESENTATIONS HAVE ACCELERATED THE RLEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONRS AND MAY HAVE HAD A BEARING ON A RECENT GOP DECISION TO BRING 13 OF THEM TO TRIAL. IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW A REDUCTION OR DENIAL OF U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE AS A RESULT OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COULD CAUSE DEEP RESENTMENT AND
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UNDERMINE U.S. INFLUENCE--PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS.
LANDAU

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